Sermon: (Phil 1.29) **You have been given the privilege of serving Christ, not only by believing in him, but also by suffering for him.**

What do you look forward to, now that it is spring? Do we look forward to anything else in life?

Paul looked forward to death (21). Death, for Paul, was a great thing, as it meant being fully with Christ. But even more importantly Paul looked forward to continuing helping others (22, 24, 25a).

What help did he hope to bring? Progress and joy in the faith (25). What kind of progress? Economic? Growing relationships in the church? In enabling others to take on responsibility? Probably not - TEXT.

When we believe in Christ this is not about doctrine, but trust. Do you trust Christ with your life? TEXT.

[1] How does believing in Christ serve him?

When we trust someone relationship strengthens, other doors open eg child growing up trusts.

When we trust Christ ditto, but also it acts as a witness.
If trusting Jesus brings us joy, others will see this.

[2] How does suffering serve Christ?

Paul was willing to face the wilderness (28, 29), and its suffering - not the suffering of illness, accident, or when responsibilities weigh you down; these may not be acceptable or right.

But that suffering which comes when we *joyfully* accept responsibility, eg in giving or serving others.

What helps in this suffering is a common purpose (27) TEXT.

We ask God to help us discover in what ways this parish can serve him, how each individually can serve him. That might mean taking a risk, not dismissing possibilities too quickly. It applies whether you have been in the church forever or whether you just walked through the door for the first time.